Oral Delivery

• speak fluidly and audibly: an excellent delivery style helps keep your audience attentive and focused (rehearse this!)
• emphasize key words or phrases that help your audience follow your argument; sometimes it helps to number your main points and refer to those numbers as you speak (“My argument consists of three main parts…” and later “My second point…”)
• make eye contact with your audience: avoid reading your presentation
• body language counts: look assertive, alert, in control; be attentive to audience response
• avoid distracting vocal “ticks,” such as repeating “ah” or “um” or “like”; it’s okay to pause and be momentarily silent
• avoid distracting body “ticks,” (e.g., hair twirling)
• don’t rush! we need to think and absorb as we listen to you
• observe any time limit you might have; practice the presentation to be sure you can deliver it without rushing: less can be more

Content

• begin with a clear thesis: i.e., an overview of your arguments and what you will cover
• organize your arguments carefully, so your audience can easily follow
• present clear evidence—e.g., visual, textual—for each main point
• at the end, briefly summarize what you’ve demonstrated and address the “so what” question: why does this matter? what import does it have for art history? what exactly do you conclude?

Audience Issues

• consider the level of expertise of your audience and pitch your presentation to that level
• be ready to respond to audience questions; if necessary, ask people to repeat or clarify their questions for you

Visual/Technological Aspects

• select a reasonable number of images that directly address your points; be sure to have good quality digitals
• judiciously combine words and images: as soon as text is projected, audiences read it (and listening drops off!), so keep it short; e.g., use key words or “bullet lists” rather than full sentences
• helpful text might include brief ID labels adjacent to images; significant dates; spelling of specialized terminology, places or names; concise quotes from primary sources
• edit carefully any text you include: avoid typos!
• practice your presentation on a different computer from that on which you created it, in order to confirm your CD or flash drive will likely work on the classroom computer; if possible, practice in the classroom